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Message Text

SECRET

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11
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 IGA-01 SAM-01 OPR-02 A-01

(ISO) W
---------- 035812
O 080910Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 210

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 6056

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CB, US
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH ACTING PRESIDENT

1. I SAW ACTING PRESIDENT SAUKHAM KHOY AT NOON APRIL 8. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A SYSTEM WHEREBY I SEE THE ACTING PRESIDENT AT LEAST ONCE A DAY. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION I EXPLAINED THAT I DO NOT EXPECT ANY RICE TO BE AIRLIFTED INTO PHNOM PENH TODAY BECAUSE OF THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF TAN SON NHUT AIRPORT, WHERE THE RICE FLIGHTS ORIGINATE. HE UNDERSTOOD THE REASON FOR THE TEMPORARY REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF US FLIGHTS INTO PHNOM PENH.

2. I THEN DISCUSSED WITH THE PRESIDENT A PROBLEM WHICH HAD ARISEN EARLIER IN THE DAY AT POCHENTONG AIRPORT, WHERE KHMER AIR FORCE SECURITY GUARDS HAD PREVENTED AMERICAN VEHICLES CARRYING KHMER EMPLOYEES OF THIS MISSION FROM GAINING ACCESS TO THE AIRFIELD TO BE EVACUATED ON C-130 BACK-HAUL AIRCRAFT. THIS INSTRUCTION HAD EVIDENTLY BEEN GIVEN BY KAF COMMANDING GENERAL EA CHHONG ON ORDERS FROM THE MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY. WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THIS PROBLEM I IMMEDIATELY COMMUNICATED WITH ACTING PRIME MINISTER HANG THUN HAK IN ORDER TO HAVE DECISION REVERSED.
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3. AS OF THE TIME OF WRITING THIS TELEGRAM I HOPE
THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO TRICKLEOUT KHMER EMPLOYEES
WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION AND WITHOUT KHMER EXIT VISAS ON
THE C-130'S, BUT I TOLD SAUKHAM KHOY THAT IN THE EVENT
THIS HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED I WOULD APPEAL TO HIM TO
GIVE THE NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS. I QUITE FRANKLY
EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT WE HAVE A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY
TOWARDS THESE KHMER EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING
FOR OUR MISSION FOR A LONG TIME AND TO THE EXTENT THAT
THEY CAN DEPART UNIMPEDED TO U-TAPAO, IT WILL FACILITATE
FUTURE EVACUATION OF OTHER KHMERS IF THIS SHOULD EVER
BECOME NECESSARY. IN THIS CONNECTION, I POINTED OUT THAT
MY SENIOR STAFF AND SOME 50 AMERICANS ARE STILL HERE
AND WE ARE DOING ALL WE CAN TO CONTINUE PROVIDING THE
KHMERS WITH THE NECESSARY FOOD AND AMMUNITION.

4. SAUKHAM KHOY THEN SAID THAT "EVERYTHING DEPENDS
ON THE AMERICAN CONGRESS". IF THE CONGRESS REFUSES
ADDITIONAL FUNDS, THE REPUBLIC WILL COLLAPSE WITHIN
DAYS IF NOT HOURS THEREAFTER. I REPLIED THAT THE
PRESIDENT WILL BE SPEAKING ON APRIL 10, WHICH IS
APRIL 11 CAMBODIAN TIME, BUT I DID NOT EXPECT ANY
ACTION BY CONGRESS FOR AT LEAST A COUPLE OF DAYS, IF
NOT LONGER AFTER THAT.

5. AS I WAS GETTING UP TO LEAVE, SAUKHAM KHOY ASKED
ME BLUNTLY WHETHER IN THE EVENT THE ATTACK ON PHNOM
PENH OCCURS BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL VOTE, THE AMERICAN
MISSION WOULD REMAIN HERE OR WOULD EVACUATE. I REPLIED
THIS DEPENDED TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THE MILITARY SITUATION
AT THE MOMENT, WHICH IN TURN DEPENDED ON HOW WELL THE
KHMERS FOUGHT.

5. I PLAN TO SEE THE PRESIDENT AGAIN TOMORROW AND HAVE
AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH LONG BORET LATER IN THE
AFTERNOON. HE IS RETURNING FROM BANGKOK SHORTLY
AFTER ONE P.M.
DEAN

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